

DDS EMPLOYEE NEWS

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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Battling the Cold to Feed the Hungry

Southbury Training School (STS) recently ended another successful food drive, collecting over 1,700 lbs. of food and \$715.00 in donations.

"We do well every year, which is great because there is such a need to keep food banks and shelters well stocked throughout the winter months," said Kathie Logan, coordinator of the drive.

This year was especially successful thanks to the STS Fire Department. Fire Chief Tim Baldwin and his staff came up with a "Fill the Ambulance with Food" idea. On the afternoon of December 17, an extremely cold and blustery day, the fire department parked one of their ambulances near the entrance to the facility and as staff arrived or left for work they dropped off both food and monetary contributions. This resulted in many additional boxes of food, along with \$200.00, being collected. "What Chief Baldwin and his crew did was absolutely wonderful," said Kathie. They are very community-minded and really wanted to be actively involved. I cannot thank them enough."



(left to right) Firefighter Gary Abrams, Assistant Fire Chief Thomas Bowolick, Fire Chief Timothy Baldwin, and Fire Personnel William Kiliany and Donna Kean.

Kathie begins planning for the food drive a couple of months ahead of time each year. Volunteer Services decorates nearly 100 food collection boxes that are placed in various locations on campus.

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Hiring and Managing Your Own Employees

Recently, Sandra Cusano, Nicole De Masi, Jamie Louchen, David Roberson, Christian Schipiani, and Ivan Villa celebrated their completion of the “Hiring and Managing Your Own Employee” training program using a curriculum developed by the University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence (UCE). The celebration included a graduation ceremony at the State Capitol, where each individual received a Certificate of Excellence from Deputy Commissioner Kathryn du Pree. Greg McCluskey, Lori Sandora, and Louis and Mary Lou Savo also completed the curriculum, but were unable to attend the graduation event.



Above: Program participants pose with their certificates

These individuals were part of a CPASS (Community-Integrated Personal Assistance Services and Supports) Pilot Project funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Staff from the UCONN Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and the DDS Self Determination Directors partnered together to implement this pilot project. Self Determination Directors and six of the DDS Self Advocate Coordinators participated in train-the-trainer sessions. Upon completion, the Self Advocate Coordinators met with consumers who had volunteered to participate in one-on-one meetings to review and complete modules developed by the UCEDD. Evaluations of the pilot were completed by all participants.

The department has purchased easy-to-read and easy-to-use “Hiring and Managing Employee” training materials that have been created by and for consumers and their families, which will allow more individuals to learn how to manage and direct their own supports. The department has also used information obtained from this pilot to enhance access to training and technical support for individuals who choose to hire and manage their own employees. In the future, all individuals who choose to hire and manage their own staff will have the option to participate in structured and consistent small group, or one-to-one instruction, on a variety of topics related to the hiring and supervision of employees. We greatly appreciate the time and energy that consumer and family member volunteers gave to this project. Their contributions and commitment to quality improvement have helped us to find a better way to deliver supports and services at DDS.

Battling the Cold, *continued*



(left to right) STS staff brave the cold to collect and deliver items to the Connecticut Food Bank

Building Services distributes the boxes and then picks them up and delivers them to the Connecticut Food Bank Waterbury warehouse at the end of the drive.

“I depend on these two departments every year and they never let me down,” said Kathie. Having folks step forward to do even more, like the Fire Department did, is a huge bonus. They don’t know it yet, but I’m hoping they’ll do another ‘Fill the Ambulance with Food’ next year. I’m counting on them now!”